

25X1A9a



December 27, 1965

The Editor
The Washington Post
1515 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to Mr. Richard Brightson's rather naive letter to the Post ("Without the CIA," December 23, 1965). Having commenced a career as a professional intelligence officer some thirty years ago and served subsequently in ONI, OSS, Battle Force Pacific and finally more than a decade as an official of the CIA, I feel strongly that Mr. Brightson's attack on the competency of CIA's intelligence analysis and estimative staff must be answered by some one not bemused by the tongue-in-cheek whimsies of James Bond and UNCLE and who has not only read more than a short serialization of the Penkovsky Papers, but actually worked with the original material.

First, as to "suspicious-looking sources" and Mr. Brightson's assumption that the estimators do not have access to the sources. The information that flows into the analytical and estimative process comes from a wide range of sources - all varieties of published materials and foreign broadcasts (sixty-five foreign languages in daily use), photography, travel reports, items of equipment, etc. and, of course, clandestine agent reports. The evaluation of these sources and the material supplied is performed by experts, and in the case of agent reports by those case officers who are closest to the agent net in question. All reports are accurately rated as to reliability of the source and as to the credibility of the material. If the need arises, there are not many cases where the intelligence analyst cannot be put directly in touch with the source.

25X1A9a



-2-

Second, as to the competence of the analysts and estimators - those "individuals without an immediate and intimate working knowledge of the subject matter". Within the Board of National Estimates and its staff are prepared the periodic and ad hoc estimates which go to the senior policy level in State and Defense, to the National Security Council, and to the President. Many of the men on the Board and its staff date their intelligence experience from the early days of OSS, almost a quarter century ago, others have come to the CIA from the military intelligence services and from the senior level of the academic community. Better than 90% have advanced academic degrees in fields of history, political science, or economics, directly pertinent to their work. About 75% have enhanced their area and subject knowledge by residence overseas; and in addition, the CIA for years has had in operation a program of sending analysts overseas on familiarization tours to compensate for lack of foreign residence. These all are men of dedication and highest competence, who have individually devoted the major portion of their mature lives to the study of the area or subject with which they now deal. What new "more legitimate information-gathering operation," as suggested by Mr. Brightson, could possibly acquire such a wealth of talent and how long would it take? Decades certainly.

Finally, perhaps I might suggest to Mr. Brightson (and to others of like thinking) that instead of James Bond, they read with some attention such authoritative books as Allen Dulles' "Craft of Intelligence" and Sherman Kent's "Strategic Intelligence," before recommending abolition of the present order and a possible return to the intelligence chaos of the pre-World War II era.

Very truly yours

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "H. R. O.", written over a redacted area.



25X1A9a

PGS:sm